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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

29 September 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD

SUBJECT: National Operations Plan to Exploit Communist Bacteriological Warfare Hoax, Mistreatment of Prisoners of War, and Other Atrocities Perpetrated By Communist Forces During the Korean War

Transmitted herewith in accordance with the decision of the Board on 23 September 1953 is a copy of a complete program on the above subject.

This program consists of an over-all national plan which outlines the requirements, the actions under way, and the additional actions required to provide for a complete exploitation of the above subject. In addition, appended as tabs "A" and "B" are two specific implementing plans which have been completed by other ad hoc panels in satisfaction of two of the requirements listed in the over-all program.

It is recommended that the Board note the over-all program, approve the recommendations in paragraph IV thereof, and authorize dissemination to all interested agencies.

WILLIAM H. GODEL
Deputy Assistant to the
Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)

Enclosures as stated.

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NATIONAL OPERATIONS PLAN TO EXPLOIT COMMUNIST BW HOAX, MISTREATMENT OF POWS AND OTHER ATROCITIES PERPETRATED BY COMMUNIST FORCES DURING THE KOREAN WAR

OBJECTIVE

To develop an integrated national program which will provide for the coordinated exploitation of all available materials to explode the Soviet bacteriological warfare propaganda hoax, and inform the world concerning the communist mistreatment of prisoners of war and other atrocities perpetrated by the communists during the Korean War.

I. REQUIREMENTS:

a. To establish in authoritative fashion, without supplying the communists with further propaganda opportunities, the falsity of communist charges that the United States engaged in bacteriological warfare in Korea and communist China.

b. To neutralize unfavorable publicity concerning the U.S. treatment of its returned prisoners of war and to undermine communist propaganda exploitation of any necessary disciplinary or penal actions taken against any repatriated US prisoner of war.

c. To establish the principle that the United States does not condone cowardice or treasonable acts on the part of its military personnel and that those individuals who avoided capture, or who, having been captured, withstood communist pressures, are more to be praised than those who, even though they were subjected to limited physical or mental duress, succumbed to communist pressures and collaborated in the germ warfare hoax.

d. To provide for the necessary medical treatment and protection from public scorn of military personnel who succumbed to communist pressures under excessive duress while also providing for appropriate explanations and infor-

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nation output with respect to punitive action against those who are found to have been guilty of treasonable acts.

c. Through objective, factual information output, expose all provable cases of atrocities or mistreatment and violations of the existing rules of war which may be ascribed to the communists, both against prisoners of war and other military personnel in Korea.

II. ACTIONS CURRENTLY COMPLETED OR UNDER WAY:

a. As a result of experience gained from Operation Little Switch, it has been agreed by all agencies that no distinctive medical or psychical treatment or segregation should be accorded to returned prisoners of war on the basis of apparent collaboration as revealed in communist propaganda.

b. It has been agreed that all material to be obtained from psychological warfare, medical, psychiatric, or sociological interrogation of such prisoners is to be obtained while these personnel are en route from the Far East Command to the United States.

c. It has been agreed that specific depositions denying participation in bacteriological warfare and outlining the conditions and forms of duress by which such confessions were obtained are to be acquired from the personnel involved and transmitted to the U.S. United Nations delegation and other agencies as appropriate, for their use.

d. It has been determined that the Department of Defense will obtain such other information and intelligence materials as may be desired and make them available to all interested executive agencies of Government immediately upon receipt.

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e. A special panel of intelligence and information officers has been established to provide documentary and intelligence material required by the U.S. United Nations delegation, and this panel is apparently operating effectively.

f. A special panel of the Operations Coordinating Board which had been established to prepare a national plan for the exploitation of communist mistreatment of U.S. prisoners of war, has been dissolved and a new panel constituted to plan for and coordinate all aspects of the pow exchange.

g. The Department of Defense has agreed to make available to the Operations Coordinating Board all material which has been or may be collected concerning any aspects of this problem.

h. The Department of Defense has also agreed to prepare story and white paper material, radio, TV and movie material for such utilization as may be required.

i. The Department of Defense has released an announcement outlining its position with respect to distinction between those prisoners who succumbed to duress, those who refused to do so, and those who collaborated openly.

j. The Department of Defense has made available to the Department of Justice all pertinent information on possible subversive elements involving U.S. military personnel returning from Korea.

III. SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OR ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED:

a. A specific program of U.S. action to destroy and counter-exploit the Soviet bacteriological warfare myth. (Title: BASIC PLAN FOR U.S. ACTION TO DESTROY AND COUNTER-EXPLOIT THE SOVIET BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE MYTH). This program will integrate the aspects of completed, continuing, and new actions which relate to this purpose, including especially the bacteriological warfare aspects of prisoner of war experience.

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b. A specific program to exploit to the maximum all provable cases of atrocities or mistreatment and violations of the existing rules of war which may be ascribed to the Communists, both against prisoners of war and other military personnel in Korea. (Title: NATIONAL PLAN FOR EXPLOITING COMMUNIST MISTREATMENT OF U.N. PRISONERS OF WAR). This program will integrate the aspects of completed, continuing and new actions which relate to this purpose.

c. A specific program to re-establish that the United States does not condone cowardice or treasonable acts on the part of its military personnel and to establish a balanced disposition of the several categories of U.S. military personnel returning from Korea.

d. Material required by the United States UN delegation should continue to be provided.

e. All other materials required for the implementation of these programs should be obtained by the Department of Defense and provided to other interested agencies.

f. All of these requirements and programs should be coordinated by a single authoritative point of contact.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS: (to become actions when approved by the OCB)

a. That the Operations Coordinating Board note the actions already completed and approve the two specific programs called for in III a. and III b., above.

b. That the Board note the requirements in III c., above, and designate the Department of Defense as action agency.

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c. That the Operations Coordinating Board designate a member of the OCB staff as a single point of contact to provide for the coordinated exploitation of all these programs, that this officer will act as chairman for an interdepartmental working group appointed for this purpose, that the Department of Justice be invited to sit with this group and that this point of contact receive all requests for information and disseminate all information obtained to the interested agencies.

d. That the Department of Defense and other agencies provide to this point of contact all pertinent information collected to date, that this provision continue in the future, and that the departments or other agencies undertake to satisfy requirements for further information submitted to them by the designated point of contact only.

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A

BASIC PLAN FOR U. S. ACTION TO DESTROY AND COUNTER-EXPLOIT THE SOVIET BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE MYTH

1. Problem and Opportunity

a. Through manufactured "evidence", ostensible confessions extracted from U. S. prisoners of war by physical and mental torture, investigations and reports by pseudo-scientific groups, and intensive propaganda hammering, the Communists have achieved in the Free World, as well as within the Soviet orbit, some degree of belief in their allegations that the United States has engaged in bacteriological warfare in Korea and in Communist China.

b. While various U. S. Government agencies have made efforts at counteraction, the U. S. Government has not supplied the world with authoritative documentation to refute the charge, and to exploit this example to discredit Soviet propaganda in general.

c. While the various agencies of the U. S. Government have separately accumulated extensive amounts of information about this Soviet campaign, the current return of prisoners of war in Korea provides very important additional information especially useful as specific propaganda and as foundation for the development of concerted U. S. action on this matter.

2. Definition of General Objective

a. Under the supervision of the Operations Coordinating Board to assure integration with overall U. S. foreign and military policy, and to assure government-wide integration of action on this subject, the U. S. Government will undertake at once a program of refuting the false charges by documented evidence.

b. The purposes of this program will be:

(1) To discredit this example of Soviet propaganda so effectively that it can be used throughout the Free World and the Soviet orbit to demonstrate the viciousness and falsity of Communist propaganda in general.

(2) To undo and reverse any belief in their allegations which they may have achieved.

(3) To cause the Soviet bacteriological warfare propaganda campaign to so boomerang that it will be dropped.

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(4) At the proper stage of success in such U. S. counteraction, to use this example to the maximum for the broad purpose of general destruction of the effectiveness of the Soviet propaganda effort.

3. Guiding Considerations

a. The objectives defined above differ sharply from the view that the Soviet campaign has been overdone to the point of self-exposure, that its true character will in time be naturally apparent, and that the best U. S. course is to let the Soviet campaign run out without concerted and positive U. S. counter-effort. The statement of objective established here is a conclusion that U. S. interest now requires concerted positive counter-effort.

b. The Soviet bacteriological warfare propaganda campaign is based on the inhuman mental and moral breakdown of a small number of the U. S. personnel who have been captured in Korea. In this connection it is necessary to note that Soviet methods of psychological coercion are capable of compromising most individuals whom they are determined to break. Whether this reason is justification for the action of any individual is a matter strictly for agencies of military or civil justice, as the case may be. However, there is a possibility of conflict between the general propaganda objectives of the U. S. Government and the need for disciplinary or penal action in individual cases. This plan will not attempt to prejudge individual cases but the following considerations will be carefully weighed in each case prior to initiation of penal or disciplinary action.

(1) The overall propaganda objectives of the U. S. action set forth here are best served by the avoidance of punishment of military or civilian personnel who have been so exploited by the Soviet bacteriological warfare propaganda campaign.

(2) If the risk of adverse propaganda effect cannot be avoided in cases of clear necessity for disciplinary or penal action, the employment of public or publicly known investigations and proceedings should be kept to the minimum required under law.

4. Courses of Action

a. The assembly of additional information and the development of detailed courses of positive action by U. S. departments and agencies will be accomplished by an inter-agency task force, as provided in paragraph 5.

b. The processing of information will include:

(1) The identification and detailed study of the sources and methods used by the Soviets in the development of the subject matter of this campaign.

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(2) The identification of the propaganda mechanisms and targets used by the Soviets as a basis for specific U. S. counter-action. Special attention will be given to the identification of those influential persons and specialized opinion groups throughout the Free World who have been especially susceptible to this campaign.

g. The development of the U. S. positive action program will assume the following general framework of timing, approach, mechanism, and target selection:

(1) On the basis of the best current operational judgment, without waiting for completion of an exhaustive analysis of the total problem, counter-propaganda and personalized seduction and coercion will be initiated as a matter of urgency against persons and groups where the Soviet campaign has been especially effective.

(2) A dignified, continuing flow of corrective factual information will be launched widely throughout the world, under overt U. S. responsibility, increasing in tempo, intensity, and subject coverage as the development and evaluation of information is accomplished. Covert support to such overt action will be added as appropriate.

(3) The analysis of Soviet treatment of captured personnel will be completed as a matter of high priority, the results to be used as appropriate for both general propaganda and official action through diplomatic instrumentalities and official international organizations.

(4) A special effort will be made to carry U. S. propaganda to the people of the Soviet orbit, by overt and covert means, making special effort to get transmission by other Free World governments and especially by the neutralist nations.

(5) As appropriate, a campaign will be launched by overt and covert means to neutralize, over-ride, and destroy the Soviet propaganda instrumentalities which purvey the myth, giving priority attention to those which are currently and effectively active.

(6) The concentrated attention of official and non-official U. S. facilities will be directed to the development of methods for successful personal resistance to the Soviet techniques of psychological coercion.

5. Implementation

a. Under the chairmanship of a member of the OCB Staff as its representative, an inter-agency working group is established to monitor the development and execution of this plan. The membership will be

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representatives designated by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the United States Information Agency, the Director of Central Intelligence, Director of Foreign Operations, and representatives of such other agencies, on a continuing or ad hoc basis, as the membership herein designated may determine. Major aspects of such development and execution will be referred for OCB or NSC action as appropriate.

b. All departments and agencies of the U. S. Government will contribute to the procurement and assembly of information and the provision of operational facilities, as determined by the working group, including the selective extraction of additional material from or other use of returned prisoners of war.

c. In the development and execution of the positive action program, the primary responsibility of participating departments and agencies will be as follows, with collateral participation and support from others as determined by the working group with the approval of the OCB:

(1) USIA: To develop and conduct the overt propaganda actions indicated above.

(2) The Department of State: To develop and conduct the aspects of the campaign to be accomplished through the instrumentalities of diplomatic action or official U. S. interjection of this issue where appropriate into official international bodies, with particular attention to the benefits and limitations of discussion of these issues, in international bodies.

(3) The Department of Defense: To furnish the working group and participating agencies, as rapidly as possible, the material obtained from returned prisoners of war. With the cooperation of the CIA, the FBI, and such medical agencies as appropriate, the Department of Defense will analyze the experience of captured U. S. personnel with Soviet methods of personality destruction, the responsibility for devising counter-techniques to be separately determined and assigned by the OCB.

(4) CIA: As a matter of special emphasis in its intelligence responsibilities, to identify, describe, and evaluate the Soviet effort, instrumentalities and targets, and to provide such intelligence for the purpose of determining tactical priorities; and to plan and conduct all covert operational aspects of the general program.

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September 29, 1953

OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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NATIONAL PLAN FOR EXPLOITING COMMUNIST MISTREATMENT OF U.N. PRISONERS OF WAR

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I. THE BACKGROUND

1. As the Korean situation moves from an armistice towards a political conference, the return of U.N. prisoners of war has generated a multitude of stories, circulated through the press and other news media, concerning communist mistreatment of POWS. These stories describe brutal treatment, atrocities and "brainwashing" for the purpose of achieving ideological indoctrination and assisting in extracting false and inaccurate confessions, particularly confessions of having conducted psychological warfare.

2. Included in complementary action or its consequences may be the secreting and denial of repatriation of a large and as yet undetermined number of UN personnel reportedly alive in the hands of the communists and not returned during the prisoner of war exchange. It can also be expected that a relatively few number of UN prisoners of war will exercise their free choice of repatriation and will choose to remain in the communist camp.

3. It is imperative that the American public and the world audience be informed of the facts concerning communist handling of POWS. It must be demonstrated that there has been perpetrated a communist conspiracy to actively utilize their POWS, in violation of existing law and conventions, in conducting the communist total war against our free democratic society.

4. Accordingly, this integrated, coordinated plan of action has been prepared to serve the following purposes:

a. To educate the American people, including members of our Armed Forces, our diplomatic, informational and other official U.S. representatives;

b. To coordinate with the exploitation of the BW and POW issues in the United Nations by Ambassador Lodge; and

c. To disseminate the substantive materials on a global basis to our propaganda advantage.

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II. OBJECTIVES

5. The Korean armistice and political conference must be considered within the context of the global political situation which, as an integral part, embraces a climate of opinion which includes the Soviet peace offensive. Thus, there is a segment of world opinion which is concerned over the wisdom of aggravating East-West differences at a time which, from their viewpoint, might be devoted more fruitfully to exploring the possibilities of lessening international tensions. It is also a fact that some U.N. prisoners of war may still continue to be held by the communists after the prisoner exchanges have been completed.

6. Not unmindful of the necessity of jeopardizing neither the lives of U.N. prisoners of war in communist hands nor international negotiations looking toward the lessening of tensions, it is, nevertheless, imperative to expose the communist conspiracy regarding their use of POWS in the context of "total war" and their mistreatment of U.N. prisoners of war.

7. In consequence, bearing in mind the cautions implicit in paragraph 6, above, the following objectives should be achieved:

a. To educate the people of the United States and the peoples of the free world concerning the facts of the brutal, cold-blooded communist conspiracy to utilize UN prisoners of war in a total continuing struggle against the free world;

b. To demonstrate that mistreatment of POWS is a part of this conspiracy and includes physical brutalities, extraction of confessions concerning BW, "Brainwashing", and comparable tactics;

c. To provide evidence that all UN prisoners of war were similarly treated and to coordinate, as appropriate, with other UN governments concerning the implementation of this plan;

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d. To reinforce the determination of the free peoples of the world to fight communism;

e. To negate the effect of communist propaganda developing from their mistreatment of POWS;

f. To educate U.S. military personnel concerning the nature of this conspiracy with regard to mistreatment of POWS and to increase their fighting spirit;

g. To inform the American public and peoples of the free world why UN soldiers are still missing after the completion of the prisoner of war exchange;

h. With regard to the POW and BW issues, to support and reinforce political actions and propaganda materials flowing from the activities of the U.S. delegation to the 8th Session of the UN General Assembly.

i. To minimize the significance of UN personnel refusing repatriation or returning as communist sympathizers.

III. OPERATIONS

8. The exploitation of communist mistreatment of prisoners of war, and the illegal retention of those not returned during the prisoners of war exchange, is a positive and dynamic project which can achieve definite psychological gains. To be successful, the program must be one of continued and coordinated actions rather than a single-shot saturation effort. In exploiting atrocities, the program should emphasize actual atrocities and omit cases of malnutrition, lack of medical care, and other hardships common to both communist troops and prisoners of war. At the same time, the program should not generate war hysteria or take on the nature of a rabble rousing campaign. Foreign exploitation of the program should emphasize the unified resolution of the American people to resist Communism.

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9. In order to focus national and world-wide attention on this issue and to stimulate continuing press coverage, a person of national television prominence should initiate the program of exploitation of communist mistreatment of UN prisoners of war in a televised panel discussion at the earliest practicable date with a selected group of prisoner of war returnees and atrocity investigators. This television broadcast should be preceded by calculated rumors and hints that such a program is coming and will contain previously classified material which has now been downgraded and released by the Department of Defense.

10. The program will then be kept alive and followed up by:

a. Illustrated talks to domestic civic organizations, clubs, and similar groups by selected prisoner of war returnees.

b. Domestic radio and television interviews of selected prisoner of war returnees by radio and television commentators.

c. Domestic magazine and newspaper articles by-lined by prisoner of war returnees.

d. Official domestic news releases of incidents and factual data as compiled, including official photographs.

e. Exploitation by the U.S. delegation to the UN.

f. Appropriate distribution of the stories to foreign audiences.

11. The following tasks will be performed:

a. The Psychological Strategy Board (OCB) will:

(1) Accomplish over-all coordination of plans and, as appropriate, timing of activities of Department of State, Department of Defense, CIA, FOA, and USIA.

(2) Advise action agencies of necessary changes in plans and activities.

b. The Department of State will:

(1) Furnish national foreign policy guidance to participating agencies, to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations,

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and to U. S. missions abroad;

(2) Provide the U.S. delegation to the UN and U.S. missions abroad with available documented information on atrocities and prisoners of war illegally retained by the communists;

(3) Furnish Department of Defense with all available current information concerning:

(a) Foreign reaction to the program of exploiting communist mistreatment of prisoners of war;

(b) Communist intentions regarding prisoners of war being illegally held since the completion of the prisoner of war exchange;

(4) Coordinate as appropriate with foreign governments for additional exploitation of communist atrocities against prisoners of war.

c. The Department of Defense will:

(1) Take all necessary action to insure that the American people receive factual information through all media in order to achieve the objectives set forth in paragraph 7, supra;

(2) Prepare the script and select the personnel to participate in the initial telecast referred to in paragraph 9, supra;

(3) Take necessary action to implement the follow-up phase of the program as indicated in paragraph 10a through 10d, Section III;

(4) In cooperation with other governmental agencies, assist in the development of a coordinated over-all effort to exploit communist mistreatment of prisoners of war;

(5) Cooperate with the Department of State and USIA to insure coordination of domestic exploitation of communist

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mistreatment of prisoners of war with exploitation arranged by the Department of State through foreign governmental and/or information agencies;

(6) Provide the Department of State, the USIA, and CIA with available documented information on communist atrocities against prisoners of war;

(7) Maintain continuing liaison with the Department of State and CIA to procure all available current information concerning:

(a) Foreign reaction to the program of exploiting communist mistreatment of prisoners of war;

(b) Communist intentions regarding U.S. prisoners of war being illegally retained since the completion of the prisoner of war exchange;

(8) Collect and make available to all agencies all exploitable military information concerning communist atrocities against prisoners of war.

d. The Central Intelligence Agency will:

(1) Utilize available means to procure and appropriately distribute current information concerning:

(a) Communist atrocities against prisoners of war;

(b) Number, location and identity of UN prisoners of war being illegally held by the communists since the completion of the prisoner of war exchange;

(2) Utilize available means to procure current information to support the accomplishment of the objectives stated in Section II;

(3) Assist in determining communist reaction to the program;

(4) Make available to participating agencies all other information pertinent to the program.

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e. The U. S. Information Agency will:

(1) Provide world-wide distribution of information appropriate to the support of the program of exploiting communist mistreatment of UN prisoners of war;

(2) Assist in determining foreign reaction to the program.

f. The Foreign Operations Administration will:

(1) Participate in this program in such fashion as from time to time appears feasible.

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